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A
PARTICULAR ACCOUNT
OF THE
COMMENCEMENT AND PROGRESS
OF THE
INSURRECTION
OF THE
NEGROES
IN
ST. DOMINGO,
WHICH BEGAN IN AUGUST LAST.
Being a TRANSLATION of the SPEECH
MADE TO THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
THE 3d OF NOVEMBER, 1791,
BY THE
DEPUTIES
FROM THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE FRENCH PART OF
ST. DOMINGO.

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IN
ST. DOMINGO.

S I R S,

THE General Assembly of the French part of St. Domingo has appointed us a deputation to address you.—

In that character, our first duty is to assure you of the inviolable attachment of this important part of the empire to the mother country, before we describe to you the terrible events which are now working its destruction, and solicit the earliest and most effectual succour to save, if it be yet possible, its wretched remains.

Long have we foreseen the evils which afflict us, and which doubtless will end in our annihilation, if the national justice and power interpose not speedily for our relief.

We come to lay before you some particulars which yet will give but an imperfect idea of our disasters and of our situation.

The General Assembly of the French part of St. Domingo, after having been constituted at *Leogane*, had appointed to hold its sessions in the town of the *Cape*. The deputies were gradually assembling there for the purposes of their mission.

Several of them arriving on the 16th (August) at the district of Limbé, distant six leagues from the Cape, were there witnesses of the burning of a trash-house on Chabaud's plantation.

The incendiary was a negro-driver of Desgrieux's plantation. Armed with a cutlass, he fled; M. Chabaud sees, pursues, and overtakes, him; they fight, the negro is wounded, taken, and put in irons.

Being interrogated, he deposes, "that all the drivers, coachmen, domestics, and confidential negroes, of the neighbouring plantations and adjacent districts, have formed a plot to set fire to the plantations and to murder all the whites." He marks out, as ring-leaders, several negroes of his master's plantation, four of *Flaville's*, (situated at *Acul*, three leagues from the Cape,) and the negro Paul, driver on Blin's plantation at Limbé.

The municipality of Limbé proceeds to M. Chabaud's, and, on putting the same questions, receives the like answers from the incendiary-negro. The municipality presents the examination in form of a verbal process to the Northern Provincial Assembly; and, informing *Flaville's* attorney (or manager) of the names of the conspirators that are about
him,

him, advises his securing and lodging them in the prison of the Cape.

This man, of a mild and gentle disposition, inclined more to confidence than suspicion, assembles the negroes under his command, and, communicating the information he has received from the municipality, tells them he cannot give credit to a plot so atrocious, and offers them his head if they desire it. With one voice they answer, that the deposition of Desgrieux's driver is a detestable calumny, and swear an inviolable attachment to their manager. He had the weakness to believe them, and his credulity has been our ruin. The municipality of Limbé demands from M. *Planteau*, attorney of *Blin's* plantation, that they may examine the negro *Paul*. This slave, being interrogated, replies—"that the accusation brought against him is false and injurious; that, full of gratitude to his master, from whom he was daily experiencing acts of kindness, he would never be found concerned in plots that might be framed against the existence of the whites and against their property."

In return for this perfidious declaration, and under assurance from M. *Planteau* that *Paul* deserved credit, he was released.

In this state, matters continued till the 21st, when the public force of Limbé, at the requisition of the municipality, proceeded to *Desgrieux's* plantation to take into custody the negro cook, accused of being a ringleader; the negro flies; finds out the negro *Paul* of *Blin's* plantation, and, in conjunction with the other conspirators, they prepare fire and sword, destined for the completion of their horrible designs.

In the night, between the 22d and 23d, twelve negroes reach the sugar-house of *Né's* plantation, at Acul, seize
upon

upon the apprentice refiner; drag him before the great house, where he expires under their wounds. His cries, bring out the attorney of the estate, who is laid breathless on the ground by two musket-balls. The wretches proceed to the apartment of the head refiner, and assassinate him in his bed. A young man, lying sick in a neighbouring chamber, they leave for dead under the blows of their cutlasses; yet he has strength to crawl to the next plantation, where he relates the horrors he has witnessed, and that the *surgeon* only was spared; an exception which was repeated in respect to the surgeons in general, of whose abilities the negroes had reckoned they might stand in need.

The plunderers proceed to *Clement's* plantation, and there kill the proprietor and the refiner.

Day begins to break and favours the junction of the ill-disposed, who spread over the plain with dreadful shouts, set fire to houses and canes, and massacre the inhabitants.

That same night the revolt had broken out on the three plantations of *Galifet*.^{*} At one of which, the blacks, with arms in their hands, make way into the chamber of the refiner, with a design to assassinate him, but only wound him in the arm; favoured by the night, he escapes, and runs to the great house. The whites, who reside there, unite for their defence. M. Odeluc, a member of the General Assembly, and attorney for the concerns of *Galifet*, comes to the Cape and gives information there of the insurrection of his negroes. Escorted by the patrol, he reaches the plantation, seizes the ring-leaders, and returns at their head to the town.

* At the Cape, it was a proverbial mode of expressing any man's happiness—
 “Ma foi il est heureux comme un negre de *Galifet*.”—“He is as happy as one
 of *Galifet's* negroes.”

Immediately

Immediately he sets out again, with twenty men in arms, that he may restore tranquillity and maintain order. But the negroes are all united, and attack him. *Their standard was the body of a white child empaled upon a stake.* M. Odeluc, addressing himself to his coachman, whom he perceived among the foremost, exclaims—"Wretch, I have treated thee ever with kindness, why dost thou seek my death?" "True," he replied, "but I *have promised* to massacre you:" and that instant a hundred weapons are upon him. The majority of the whites perished with him, particularly M. Averout, also a member of the General Assembly.

At the very same time *Flaville's* gang (that which had so recently sworn fidelity to the attorney) is armed, revolts, enters the apartments of the whites, and murders five of them who reside on the plantation. The attorney's wife, on her knees, begs the life of her husband. The inexorable negroes assassinate the husband, and tell the wife that she and her daughters are reserved for their pleasures,

M. *Robert*, a carpenter, employed on the same plantation, is seized by the negroes, who bind him between two planks, and saw him deliberately in two,

A youth, aged sixteen, wounded in two places, escapes the fury of the cannibals, and it is from him we learn these facts. The sword then is exchanged for the torch; fire is set to the canes, and the buildings soon add to the conflagration; it is the appointed signal; revolt is the word; and, with the speed of lightning, it bursts out on the neighbouring plantations; wherever there are whites, there are so many victims slaughtered; men, women, the infant, and the aged, expire undistinguished under the knife of the assassins.

A colonist

A colonist is murdered by the very negroe whom he had most distinguished by acts of kindness. His wife, stretched upon his body, is forced to satisfy the brutality of the murderer.

M. Cagnet, inhabitant of Acul, seeking to escape from these horrors, embarks for the Cape. His domestic negro begs permission to attend him. Such a mark of attachment determines his master to leave him as a guard upon the plantation, that he may endeavour to preserve it. But M. Cagnet has hardly set foot on-board when he sees that slave, with a torch in his hand, setting fire to his property.

Expresses being sent to the Cape, armed citizens and troops of the line are dispatched from thence; they proceed towards the strongest troop of the mutineers, and destroy a part of them; but, finding the number of revolvers increasing in centuple proportion to their losses, and being unable to keep their ground, they retreat in expectation of a reinforcement, which arrived only in the night, headed by M. de Touzard, who took the command of the little army.

M. de Touzard, perceiving that the revolvers were rallying on *Latour's* plantation, marched thither. Their number might be from three to four thousand. The moment the artillery was ready to play to disperse them, the negroes pretended to surrender. M. de Touzard advanced; many of them exclaimed, that they would return to their duty. He trusted to their repentance, and retired. Humanity and the interests of the colony enjoined his forbearance, but it was not long before he was undeceived; the negroes separated indeed, but only that they might recruit their numbers with all the neighbouring gangs. The army was returned into the town to take new steps for putting an end to the disorder. The
revolvers

revolters profited by this interval to fill up the measure of their depredations. Our communications with the adjacent districts became impeded. We were alarmed lest the disorder had reached them, and our fears were soon realised. We learnt, by means of persons escaped by sea, that *Limbé*, *Plaisance*, *Port Margot*, were a prey to like horrors, and every citizen, in detailing his misfortunes, discovered to us new crimes.

M. *Potier*, inhabitant of Port Margot, had taught his negro-driver* to read and write. He had given him his liberty, which the fellow enjoyed; he had bequeathed him 10,000 livres, which were soon to be paid him; he had also given to this negro's mother a piece of land, on which she cultivated coffee. The monster seduces the gang of his benefactor and of his mother, burns and destroys their possessions, and obtains, for this action, a promotion to the generalcy.

At *Great River*, an inhabitant, M. *Cardineau*, had two natural sons of colour, to whom he had given their liberty, and who, in their childhood, had been the objects of his tenderest cares. They accost him with a pistol at his breast, and demand his money. He consents; but no sooner have they obtained it than they stab him.

At *Acul*, M. *Chauvet du Breuil*, deputy to the General Assembly, is assassinated by a mulatto, aged sixteen, his natural son, to whom he destined his fortune, having manumitted him from his childhood.

At the *Great Ravine of Limbé*, a colonist, father of two young ladies, whites, is bound down by a savage, ring-leader

* The French word is *commandeur*, signifying, a neg. • trusted with the direction of a small party when at work.

of a band, who ravishes the eldest in his presence, delivers the younger over to one of his satellites; their passion satisfied, they slaughter both the father and the daughters.

M. and Mad. *Baillon*, with their son-in-law and daughter, encouraged by their negroes, remain on their plantation; but the depredations of those, whom they have most trusted, warn them that it is time to fly. The nurse of Mad. *Baillon*, the younger, confesses to her that there is not an instant to be lost, and offers to attend them. An old servant engages to conduct their steps. Luckily Mad. *Baillon*'s nurse was wife of *Paul Blin*, one of the negro generals, and had obtained from him some provisions for his master's family. At her intreaty, he had even promised to provide, at a distant barquadiere, a canoe to carry the fugitives to the Cape. But how great their grief at seeing a little skiff, void of mast, or oars, or rowers! One of them tries to embark in it; the flimsy boat over-sets, and his life, with difficulty, is saved. Again, they apply to *Paul*, and his wife reproaches him with breaking his promise. He replies, "that he only provided this as a preferable mode of death to that which the revolted had prepared for the unhappy family:" petrified, at this recital, with terror! despair gives them new strength; they set off on foot, and after performing a journey of five leagues only, in twenty-one days, every day encompassed with dangers, they arrived at *Port Margot*, whence they reach the Cape.

Mean time the flames gained ground on all sides. *La Petite Anse, la Plaine du Nord*, the district of *Morin, Limonade*, presented only heaps of ashes and of dead bodies.

Nothing, one would think, could deepen the horrors of this recital; and yet, Sirs, is it marked with features of a still more dreadful character, when we see that the
slaves,

slaves, which had been most kindly treated by their masters, were the soul of the Insurrection. It was *they* who betrayed and delivered those humane masters to the assassin's sword; it was *they* who seduced and stirred up to revolt the gangs disposed to fidelity. It was *they* who massacred whomsoever refused to become their accomplice. What a lesson for *the Amis des Noirs* !* What a heart-breaking discovery to the colonists themselves, to whom futurity could suggest nothing but motives of despair, if, in the midst of so many crimes, there had not yet been found slaves who gave proofs of an invincible fidelity, and who made manifest their determination to detest the seductions of those who would, with promises of liberty, enveigle them to certain destruction. That liberty is theirs, but it is the gift of their masters; the reward of their attachment; and it has been ratified by the representatives of the colony, amidst the transports of universal gratitude.

We resume the narrative of our disasters. At this time, one hundred thousand negroes were in rebellion; and all the manufactories and plantations, of more than half the Northern province, appeared only as one general conflagration. The plains and the mountains are filled with carnage and deluged with blood. The colonists, stupified with fear, know not where to seek refuge; one flies for safety to the woods; is there betrayed by his negroes and stabbed; another confides in the promises of his gang; a rebel ring-leader steals in among them; the gang rises, and the proprietor is their victim.

Scattered over a surface of land; intersected by mountains and deep valleys; the flying inhabitants attempt to rally and to sell their lives dearly. The roads are obstructed; they are taken and massacred.

* Or *friends of the blacks*, by which name is distinguished, in France, the party that have seconded the English project for abolishing the Slave-Trade.

Those, who re-unite, oppose but a feeble bulwark against the swelling torrent; they are dispersed and taken; they expiate in tortures their exertions for self-preservation. These horrible scenes were acting at the gate of the town of the Cape. Terror and dismay take possession of every mind; yet all feel the urgency of providing for their safety. They assemble, act in union, the citizens take arms, and the General Assembly places the patriotic troops under the command of the governor.

The town of the Cape had, with about three thousand men at the most, to keep in check fifteen thousand blacks ready to follow the example of those without, and *many ill-disposed whites*. The General Assembly deliberates one entire night upon the means of preservation from internal enemies. The result was to adhere solely to a well-directed and constant watch over their conduct and their dispositions. The revolt had been too sudden and too well concerted to leave a hope of stopping or of alleviating its ravages. The town of the Cape (that side next the sea excepted) was defenceless and incapable of fortification, without a delay of several days and immense labour. It was extremely to be feared that the revolted negroes should pour down upon the town, and, favoured and seconded by those within, should make a general massacre of the whole race of the whites. There remained therefore but one resource; which was, to take possession of the defiles upon the high Cape, contiguous to the town; to establish a post above the town, which, by the help of the adjoining marshes, might protect it; and to defend the road of *la Petite Anse* by a battery of cannon and boats lashed together. This resolution was adopted and executed; thence-forwards the Cape, surrounded by a solid palisade, by chevaux-de-frize, and by considerable posts, might feel its situation less alarming.

During

During this interval, not a minute was lost in conveying, by sea, information to the parishes which were yet uncontaminated, and in suggesting to them the proper precautions to be taken. The inhabitants of those parishes formed a junction, and established camps, more or less considerable: these were stationed at *Trou, Vallière, Great River, Moruet, Dondon, la Marmelade, Port Margot*, and other places in danger. The revolted followed the same plan; they stationed camps in all the districts they had ravaged. Moreover, they forced the camp of the whites at Great River, and killed or put to flight all the inhabitants of that district: the camp at Dondon shared the same fate, after a contest of seven hours, in which more than one hundred whites fell. The few unfortunate people, who escaped on that occasion, sought refuge among the Spaniards, but were repulsed.

M.M. *Granal, Roynaud, and Lambert*, inhabitants of Great River and Dondon, reached, however, the house of a Spanish colonist, their intimate friend: this worthy man, on one side urged by the strongest feelings, on the other by fear of being burnt out by his countrymen, determined to keep the three Frenchmen locked up in his closet, from whence he let them escape at night, in the midst of deserts, and under advantage of a storm.

Shall it be told you, that you may feel the indignation which the conduct of our neighbours must have excited, that depositions and the public report state, that several inhabitants of Dondon, who took refuge among the Spaniards, were driven beyond the limits, and delivered over to the rebel negro chiefs, in consideration of three Johannes's (132 livres of France) per head, and that they were put to death.

The

The districts of *Rocou, Maribaroux, le Terrier Rouge, Jacquesy, Caracole, Ouanamintie*, and fort *Dauphin*, forming the Eastern part of the Northern province, were still uninjured; their defence was an object of instant necessity.

A camp was established under the orders of M. de Rouvrai, which completely answered the purpose for which it was formed, in spite of the continual efforts of the banditti.

While these alarming transactions were passing, the town of the Cape was resorted to by the inhabitants of the neighbouring hills and plains, escaping from the sword of the assassins. It was then that M. Blanchelande thought it prudent to march out two small bodies of troops, which, joined by M. de Rouvrai, attacked and carried, in succession, several camps of the revolvers, situated on the plantations of *Chabanon, la Chevallerie, Bullet, Duplat, Charitte, Denort, Dagout, and Galiset*; in each of which many female white prisoners were set at liberty. It is from them, Sirs, that we learnt to what an excess the revolvers had carried their barbarity.

Your sensibility, already excited, could not endure the narrative of those horrid scenes which these women witnessed.

From the rebel prisoners, we discovered that the different chiefs of these banditti are at bitter enmity with each other; every troop forms a party, and these parties are always at variance; always ready for mutual destruction. The authority they have established is absolute despotism. The chiefs exercise unheard-of tyranny over those they command: the least disobedience, the slightest sign of hesitation, is punished with death; and it is a notorious truth, that more negroes

have

have been sacrificed to their rage and suspicion than we have been obliged to destroy for our defence, although we have obtained over them several signal advantages. Their acts of cruelty fall even on those who have voluntarily engaged in the revolt. But who will not shudder to hear in what manner they punish those who determine to remain faithful to their masters.—They seize them by force and roast them at the next fire. They have been seen, with the cruelty of cowards, placing in the front of battle the aged, the infants, and the women; and, finding them unfit for action, making use of them to parry our blows. Have they any wounded, and for want of surgeons cannot dress their wounds?—they confine them in a hut and set fire to it. In short, take this for certain, if the sanguinary designs of these uncivilized and ferocious men should be realized in respect to the whites; should they accomplish the extermination of the Europeans in the colony; soon would you see St. Domingo presenting a picture of all the atrocities of Africa. Subjected to the most arbitrary masters, distracted by the most cruel wars, they would render their prisoners subservient to their caprices; and the moderated slavery, under which they are held by us, would be exchanged for a slavery, aggravated by all the refinements of barbarism.

In the deplorable situation we have described, M. Blanchelande, who acted in concert with the General Assembly, thought it right to propose a proclamation which might contribute to bring back the revolted to their duty. The General Assembly, composed of planters, perfectly acquainted with the character of the negroes, represented to him the danger of such a proclamation, and positively refused it their sanction. The week following, Mr. Blanchelande renewed his proposal. The same motives dictated the same refusal. He persisted, and determined to issue it in his name alone, and
he

he did it, because he learned that the negroes wished to submit themselves. The proclamation was made and delivered by twelve dragoons. What effect was produced by this measure? Seven of them were assassinated in the camp of the rebels, and the others saved themselves only by encountering the most imminent dangers.

It would answer no end, Sirs, to describe to you all the horrors to which our unfortunate fellow-citizens have been a prey. Posterity will be shocked at so many cruelties, committed in the names of philosophy and liberty.

Yet have we only, in this relation, sketched to you some scattered outlines of the dreadful picture of those evils, which have visited, probably still visit, a country, but lately so peaceful, so flourishing, so valuable, to the French empire! You will better judge by a summary of the losses which the colony had experienced at the period of our departure.

They reckoned, in the parishes of *Plaisance, Port Margot, Limbé, Marmelade, Acul, la Plaine du Nord, la Petite Anse, Morin, Limonade, Sainte Susanne, Moka, Cotellettes, Great River, Dondon*, and other districts, more than two hundred sugar-works, twelve hundred coffee-works, many indigo-works, entirely burned down; a great number of potteries, distilleries, many considerable villages, public magazines, an immense quantity of merchandise, had shared the same fate. By adding, to these inappreciable objects, all the instruments of husbandry, utensils for manufactures, household-furniture, and specie; horses, mules, and other cattle; some idea may be formed of the enormity of our losses, which we value at upwards of six hundred millions of livres. The assistance of the nation, the exertions of commerce, and our industry, may, perhaps, repair them: but what shall dry the tears that flow for more than one thousand

thousand of our fellow-citizens dead, the victims of this cruel revolt. Can sensibility be mute, when we reflect, that fifteen thousand negroes will be destroyed before order and tranquillity be re-established, and that, should they succeed in their projects, St. Domingo will become the tomb of fifty thousand Frenchmen!

Hitherto we have only spoken of the misfortunes of the Northern parts. They are not all we have to lament. Blood was spilt in the Western province; fire destroyed several properties there; the gangs of *Grandfonds*, *Charbonniere*, and *Fond Ferrier*, revolted.

A conspiracy, discovered at Leogane, preserved that district from carnage and conflagration, as well as those of *Archaie*, *Des Vases*, and *le Cul de Sac*. *Jeremie* experienced some commotions, but a timely arrest of the excitors of the troubles saved that place from the impending evil.

The Southern parts had also great cause of alarm. The precautions taken there had, to the time of our departure, maintained their tranquillity; yet the population there is so thin, that the measures employed are more the proofs of timidity than the pledges of security.

Thus, Sirs, you behold on every side the colony threatened, and if there be colonists who are yet to be saved from so many dangers conjoined, still will they have to contend with treachery and famine, with epidemical diseases caused by so many unburied carcases in a burning climate, with disorders more acute, the effects of fatigue, terror, and vexation; in a word, with every evil that nature engenders for the destruction of mankind. What just reason have we not to dread the ruin of the colony, a ruin that must accelerate that

of the mother-country ! The destruction of our plantations will produce the stagnation of your manufacturies, successive bankruptcies will injure public credit, and, even in Paris, will be felt by the moneyed man and the tradesman, in the inmost of your provinces will check the collection of taxes ; the decrease of shipping in the sea-ports will reduce to beggary an innumerable body of labourers and of seamen : then will cries of rage and despair ascend from every quarter, calling upon you for justice against the authors of so many calamities ; and can they be mistaken, by the perfidious cunning, by the cruel perseverance, with which they have so long been contriving a catastrophe, now so terribly conspicuous !

We passed our lives in tranquillity, Sirs, in the midst of our slaves. A paternal government had, for many years past, meliorated the condition of our negroes ; and we dare affirm, that millions of Europeans, attacked by every want, subject to every misery, possess fewer enjoyments than those who have been represented to you, and to the world in general, as loaded with chains, and perishing by a dilatory death. The situation of the negroes, in Africa, without property, without political or civil existence, continually a prey to the weak capricious fury of tyrants, who divide that vast uncivilized country, is changed in our colonies for a condition of comfort and enjoyment. They are deprived of nothing ; for, liberty, which is not theirs, is a plant that has not yet proved fertile in their native soil ; and, whatever the spirit of party may assert, whatever imagination may invent, well-informed men are not to be persuaded that the negroes, in Africa, have the enjoyment of freedom. The traveller,* who has most recently visited a part hitherto almost unknown of that extensive country, has given us, in his long and interesting work, a history only of blood and

* Vide Bruce, ii. 216. iv. 459, &c.

desolation. The men who inhabit *Abyssinia*, *Nubia*, the *Galla*, and the *Funge*, from the coasts of the Indian ocean to the very frontiers of Egypt, seem to rival, in ferocity and barbarity, the hyænas and the tigers, which nature has there created. Slavery is, with them, a title of honour and life; in those horrible climates, is a possession; unprotected by any laws, and held only at the will of a sanguinary despot.

Let any man, of feeling and information, compare the deplorable state of the negroes, in Africa, with the mild and comfortable lot they enjoy in our colonies; let him set aside declamation, the pictures which a false philosophy has been pleased to delineate, far more from a pursuit of popularity than from zeal in the vindication of humanity. Let him recal the regulations which governed our negroes before they were seduced, alienated, from us; provided against every want, supplied with accommodations, unknown in the greater part of the cottages of Europe. Secure in the enjoyment of their properties, (*for, they had property and it was sacred,*) nursed in times of sickness, with an expence and an attention which may be sought in vain in the much-boasted hospitals of England. Protected, respected in the infirmities of old age; at ease, in respect to their children, their families, and their affections; subjected to a labour calculated according to the strength of each individual, because individuals and employments were classed; and interest (even should humanity fail) enjoined an attention to the preservation of their numbers; enfranchised whenever they had merited it by important services. Such was the just unflattered picture of the government of our negroes; and this domestic government had been meliorated, particularly in the last ten years, with an anxiety, of which you will find no example in Europe. The sincerest attachment connected the master and his slaves. We slept in security in the midst of men that were become

come our children, and many of us had neither locks nor bars to their houses.

Not, Sirs, that we would disguise to you, that there did exist, among the planters, a very small number of hard and ferocious masters. But what was the lot of these bad men? Blighted in their fame, detested by men of character, outcasts of society, discredited in their business, they lived in disgrace and dishonour, and died in misery and despair. Their names are never pronounced without indignation in the colony, and the estimation in which they are held serves as a guide to those, who, yet unversed in the management of their gangs, might be led, by the impetuosity of their tempers, into excesses, proved, by experience, to be as contrary to good policy as they are, by increase of knowledge and humanity, grown disreputable.

Here we appeal, not to those who write romances to gain a name as men of sensibility, to acquire a momentary popularity, soon to be wrested from them by general indignation, but to those who have visited, who know, the colonies. Let *them* say if the recital we have made is faithful, or if we have coloured it, to interest you in our cause.

We repeat it, Sirs, we passed our lives in this state of tranquillity and happiness, and we returned to the mother-country, the protectress of our properties, the entire tribute of our produce, which was applied in adding to the wealth of the metropolis, of her internal strength, and of her superiority in foreign commerce.

Meantime, Sirs, a society arises in the bosom of France, and prepares at a distance the destruction and convulsions, to which we are now a prey. Unobtrusive and modest in their outset, they profess only a desire to alleviate the lot of
our

our slaves ; but that alleviation, so perfected in the French islands, must result from means totally unknown to them, while they were objects of our unceasing attention ; and so entirely were they unfit to contribute towards that end, that they obliged us to abandon it, by exciting among our slaves a spirit of mutiny, and, among us, suspicion.

In order to meliorate gradually the lot of the slaves, and to increase the number of the emancipated, there should certainly be a previous solicitous attention to the security of their masters. But, an expedient so wise would have had no weight in the temple of renown. Vanity commanded, that measures of effect should be relinquished for declamations, that we should be surrounded with terror and alarm, and that calamities should be contrived which we have predicted since the earliest proceedings of the *Amis des Noirs*, and which have now recently been realised.

Very soon this society requires an *Abolition of the Slave-Trade* ; that is to say, that the profits which may result from it to the French commerce should be transferred to foreigners ; for, never will their romantic philosophy persuade all the European powers, that it is incumbent upon them to abandon the culture of their colonies, and to leave the natives of Africa in prey to the barbarity of their tyrants rather than employ them elsewhere, and under more humane masters, in cultivating a soil, which, without them, must remain uncultivated, and whose valuable productions are, to the nation who possesses them, a fertile source of industry and prosperity.

Combining itself next with the Revolution in France, this society connects its extravagant and unreasonable system with the plan which the nation has conceived for its enfranchisement ; and, profiting by the universal ardour of all Frenchmen

in

in the cause of liberty, interests them, from the remembrance of their servitude, in its design to put an end to that of the negroes. Its blind enthusiasm, or its perversity, forgets, that those savage men are incapable of knowing liberty, or of enjoying it with moderation, and that the rash law, which should destroy their prejudices, would be, to them and to us, a sentence of death.

From that time, this society, or at least some of its members, have given unbounded loose to their enterprise; all means have seemed to them good, so they might tend to its accomplishment. The open attack, the deep and studied insinuation, the basest and most despicable calumnies, have been practised to forward their designs; ingeniously mixing cunning with audacity, the society at one time flatters us by an invitation to shake off the yoke of the French merchants, assuring us of its support if we will unite with it for obtaining a free commerce; at another time, it arms the mercantile body against us, affirming that we have in view a disgraceful bankruptcy, a chimerical independence, and that, in our vanity, we would build up a power on a level with that of France. Thus, after having endeavoured to irritate the planters and the merchants against each other, after having offered us principles incompatible with the interests of the mother-country, when, spite of its insidious counsels, we have declined to adopt them, still are we accused, by the society, of their invention, and they take hold of the declaration of the *Rights of Man*. An immortal work, and beneficial to enlightened men; but inapplicable, and therefore dangerous, to our regulations: they send it with profusion into our colonies; the journals in their pay, or under their influence, give this declaration vent in the midst of our gangs; the writings of the *Amis des Noirs* openly announce, that the freedom of the Negroes is proclaimed by the Declaration of Rights.

The

The decree of the 8th of March* seemed calculated to check these desperate plots. But can the Amis des Noirs reverence any law but those oaths by which they are bound together, and that vow which they have formed to carry fire and sword into our houses? If a law be favourable to them, they adopt, they promulgate, they interpret, that law. If contrary, they misconstrue, disavow, insult, it, without shame; they endeavour to degrade the authority on which it is founded.

The planters, merchants, and men enlightened enough not to be the dupes of their falsities, are indiscriminately the objects of their abuse. It is not enough that they have made themselves the arbiters of our property and our peace, they assume over us a supremacy of defamation; nor may we defend ourselves, and strive to parry their blows, without undergoing a torrent of their low contumely. Thus, prejudicing the public opinion, shutting up from us the channels of defence, they undermine in security the rock on which our possessions are placed; they surround it with suares; and our ruin must follow!

When it was found that they had vainly flattered themselves with obtaining from the National Assembly the emancipation of the slaves, they attempted to introduce contention among us, by persuading that Assembly to take on itself the question of the *People of Colour*.† We had required that we should ourselves make the laws upon this subject, which required great delicacy and prudence in their application. We had pledged ourselves that those laws should be just and humane.

* A decree, which left internal regulations, for the most part, under control of the colonial legislatures.

† A general term in the colonies for the mixed race, partially descended from the blacks.

But,

But, that boon, which, granted by the white planters, would have eternally cemented the ties of affection and benevolence existing between these low classes of men, is presented, by the *Amis des Noirs*, as an offering of vanity, and a means of avoiding equitable stipulations.

Other measures are tried to gain their point: they collect together at Paris some people of colour; they extol their understandings; they invite them to unite their cause with that of the negroes. These men pass over to St Domingo, in the sort of delirium occasioned by such doctrine; they communicate to the slaves those hopes with which they have been amused; they are loaded with libels and books which encourage the men of colour and the slaves to a general Insurrection, to a massacre of the whites.

Ogé is the first victim of this fatal error; one of his brothers, misled by him, declares, the 9th of March, in his death-bed testimony, that, had not the swelling of the rivers prevented the junction of the conspirators, eleven thousand rebel negroes were ready to pour down upon the Cape so early as the month of February, and to cause the devastation which took place only the 23d of August. He names the ring-leaders, gives particulars of the conspiracy, and offers proof. It is the voice of his conscience which speaks out at that moment, the last that remained to him for discovering the truth.

In the midst of this fermentation, in this general delirium, while the whites were agitated by distrust and terror, and while the negroes were indulging themselves in a thousand fatal dreams, was the discussion of the Decree of the 15th May agitated among you. A shoal of writings, previous and subsequent, have been disseminated among our gangs.
There

There have been read, and commented upon, those terrible words ! those words, the signal of blood and conflagration !

PERISH THE COLONIES !

It was then that a Letter of a Minister of the Gospel of Peace, addressed to his brethren the Men of Colour, announced to our slaves, that *soon should the sun shine on none but freemen !*

Could the Negroes, — attacked by so many temptations, — worked upon by so many manœuvres, — excited by libels, written in characters of blood, read at evenings in their huts, in the midst of assemblies of their chiefs, by men breathing only disorder and pillage :— Could they long resist the vertigo with which they were stricken ? — The memory of the kindness of their masters is erased from their minds ; a desire of novelty is all they feel ; they render themselves the instruments of some men, deeply malevolent, who have greedily seized, in the writings of the *Amis des Noirs* and in the interpretation of decrees, such arms as were best suited to lead the way to insurrection.

Is our measure of misfortune sufficiently full, that we may hope at last to have the truth no more disguised ? Have we a valid claim to the retribution of the Laws, without waiting those proofs, which must result from the Proceedings now on foot at St. Domingo, and which will be transmitted to us ? The fatal influence of the authors of so many calamities, — is it not already evidently proved by the whole of their transactions and by their criminal writings ? Can it be doubted, at this time, that our ruin is their work ? And shall France still restrain the cry of indignation, due to the guilt of our enemies ?

Flattered with hopes that misfortunes like ours would find consolation in the bosom of the mother-country, — that, on our arrival in the Capital, where we have at least a claim to pity, the hearts of our fellow-citizens would be open to our complaints,—we find ourselves preceded by calumny! Those, who have made light of our properties and our blood, reckoned upon being objects of our bitter reproaches, and have endeavoured to anticipate them. Skilled in the arts of defamation, which are habitual to them, after having rendered us the victims of their machinations, it remained to cast upon us the reproach and the shame. With a cruelty, equalled only by their disregard for probability, they have dared to invent and to report, that our Constituents were themselves the contrivers of their own afflictions; they have dared to affirm, that the absurd and barbarous project of effecting a Counter-Revolution was the object, to which they had sacrificed their properties, their families, their lives! They have dared to say, that we wished to offer ourselves to Great-Britain!

In return, we will ask of you, Sirs, with the boldness of Freemen and of French Citizens, (for, after all, we too are Frenchmen and Citizens,) we will ask of you, whether it be permitted to any set of men, of any nation upon earth, to insult, with such audacity, those whom they have injured!

What! *We* place fire and sword in the hands of our Negroes! *We* light the torch that has destroyed our plantations! *We* sharpen the daggers that have assassinated our brethren and our friends! *We* prompt the brutal passions of which our females have been the hapless victims! *We* kindle in our country the volcano which has already covered it with ashes, and which perhaps will reduce it to nothing!

These

These Desolators, calling themselves Patriots, accuse us of having plotted a Counter-Revolution. They are then uninformed, that, from the earliest days of the Revolution, it has had our veneration ; and that, as being more exposed under a despotic government to oppression, we have with greater ardour sprung towards liberty. Our most recent transactions testify in our favour. Is it the act of a Counter-Revolutionist to have declared, in constituting our Assembly, that "*We*" *would protect, with all the power of the law and of public opinion, the recovery of the debts due to the Mother-Country?* Is it the act of a Counter-Revolutionist to have there recorded, *that to the National Assembly belongs the right of instituting our political and commercial regulations?*

Is it the act of a Counter-Revolutionist to have written to the Representatives of the Nation, while the grave was opening beneath our feet, *that our last sigh and our last vow should be for our Country?*

Had we been Counter-Revolutionists, is it to the National Assembly we should have addressed such sentiments?

It is asserted, it is printed and published, that we wished to offer ourselves to Great Britain.—Our reply to this falsity is very simple, it is written in every page of our Verbal Process. There we have manifested our principles, and, we can safely affirm, the full performance of our duty.

But we will go yet farther : permit us to state a case, justified by the situation, singular in the Records of History in which we are placed.

At the moment of the Insurrection breaking out, all the inhabitants of the town of the Cape were anxious to discover the cause of an event so horrible.

A Journalist had printed the Decrees of the 13th and 15th of May last, with the Speech of M. Monneron, Deputy of the Isle of France. The first depositions state, that these papers, with all those of the pretended philanthropists, were read and commented upon, by a Mulatto upon *Normand's* plantation, in the nocturnal assemblies where the Negro-drivers met, who are now the ringleaders of the rebels. We learn that the town of the Cape was to be included in the conflagration, and that within that town those were lurking who were to set it on fire and massacre all its inhabitants. Immediately a cry of rage and despair arises on all sides. The philanthropists, France itself, are accused of this dreadful plot: distraction and fury are impressed on every countenance; every heart is in agitation; every thing speaks a horrible butchery, a general confusion. Already the report of musquets is heard! Negroes and Mulattos receive their contents at the very door of the National Assembly. Some take a white cockade, some loudly call for the protection of the English, some take a black cockade. Those words, *The Nation, the Law, and the King*, disappear from the Hall which was preparing for the General Assembly; a hand, bewildered by rage, obliterates them. Exclamations are heard, that the Nation yields us to the murderer's sword, to the torch of incendiaries! that, in short, she has delivered us over to every human crime in one day, believed to be the last of the Colony! Furious voices blaspheme against a Country, to whom they are indebted — not for their protection — but their death!

In the midst of this delirium, of which no power could repress the first explosion, the General Assembly is yet attentive to measures of security. The moments are precious. A Proclamation is issued, forbidding, under pain of death, any one to take away another's life. Four of the Members make it public even whilst it was writing. These Commissioners carry it from place to place, and meet, in every place, mobs, and shouts, and even insults; but they succeed in saving the Mulattos, who, being accused, would have been massacred; and their care and their intreaties suspend the fury of the people.

A new alarm is suggested. The General Assembly is accused of participating in the crime of the People of Colour, and is threatened. Its courage remains unabated. The Mulattos offer to arm themselves for the common defence, and to leave as hostages their wives and children. The Assembly ventures to arm them, and, uniting them with the soldiers of the regiment of the Cape, thus converts into defenders those who were nearly sacrificed as enemies.

At this violent crisis, which betokened a subversion of all things; if, giving way to impressions so calculated to inspire terror, we had experienced its effects; if, like those who surrounded and who threatened us at that moment, we had regarded our country in no other light than as the cause of our misfortunes; if we had called in a foreign power to snatch the Colonists from their butchers, to save their properties, to preserve the very credit of the Metropolis: — Where is that man, having a conscience, who would have dared to condemn us? — Yet were we still Frenchmen! — And shall we, after this, be reduced to the abject necessity of justifying ourselves from the reproach of having aimed at independence? Let them examine all our acts: if there be a
single

single one that tends to loose us from those indissoluble ties which attach us to the empire; our heads are here to suffer the punishment due to such perfidy. We know that some captains of ships, whose vanity has been wounded because their inhumanity was made public, have been ready to join the *Amis des Noirs* in finding us guilty, but the groans of dejected Commerce, feeling for our calamities and for their consequences, shall teach them their error; and that, should they succeed in rendering us odious by their calumnies, they will themselves have, ere long, to lament their success.

True, we have asked, we glory in having asked, (for, it was the duty of men invested with a trust by their fellow-citizens,) assistance from all who surrounded us! That assistance we implored in concert with the Governor-General, and therefore as Frenchmen and as men; and since, without distinction, we applied, at the same time, to three different nations, we have sufficiently proved that our intreaties, the dictates of misfortune, could conceal no project inimical to the Mother-Country. Who, indeed, will dare accuse us for having had recourse to the English of Jamaica, since the National Assembly (then informed of our calamities and of our dangers only by imperfect reports) thought fit, of itself, to express the national gratitude to that generous People?

But even, Sirs, had we called in the English not to lend us assistance but to govern us, to whom ought the guilt to be imputed? Place, for a moment, in our situation, that department of the kingdom which you believe to be the most patriotic, the most proud of the appellation of Frenchmen;—suppose the fowers of sedition had stirred up, in its bosom, servants against masters—banditti against possessors of property;—that a hundred times they had indited them with no return but contempt;—that, so far from receiving succour
from

from the Mother-Country, all that issued from its bosom seemed to teem with the seeds of revolt ; — that already the houses and properties of a multitude of citizens had fallen a prey to the disturbances ; — that they had seen the most abominable murders committed under their eyes ; — that they were hopeless of protection ; — if at such a time, so destitute and abandoned, these hapless citizens should have indulged an idea of forming new Connections and of imploring the assistance of another Country ; — To whom think you, Sirs, ought the reproach to be made ? To wretches, bewildered by despair ? or to the miscreants, who took pleasure in wearing out their patience, and in breaking asunder the dearest and most sacred ties by an excess of misery ?

We know our duty, Sirs, and we love it ; but we know too and boldly claim our rights. We dedicate, to the prosperity of the Mother-Country, the entire produce of our labours. She owes us protection against foreign force ; she owes us the security of our properties and peace against the plots of the turbulent.

It is now proved that the influence of the *Amis des Noirs* is fatal to the Colonies. Let them weave what sophisms they please, they cannot hide the evidence of our calamities. There is not an unprejudiced man existing who can doubt, that their labours, their declamations, their writings, their infamous emissaries, have been the active, persevering, cause, which, for two years past, has paved the way for our ruin, and which at length has succeeded.

France owes us protection ; but her strength will be insufficient to give us confidence, while she suffers the contrivers of our revolts and massacres to lurk in her bosom.

She

She owes us protection; but in vain would she render it effective, if such attempts are to remain unpunished; that, which should disgrace our enemies, serves only to give them fresh encouragement.

She owes us protection; but to what end her fleets and her armies, if she permit that seditious writings should incessantly scatter in our houses the seeds of every trouble! if she permit that we should be pressed down with humiliations! and if to encompass us with murder and with blood become, in the eyes of the Country to whom we sacrifice ourselves, the road to glory and to fame!

Forgive, Sirs, the warmth of our language. So many calamities have given us a claim to speak out. Grief, bitter grief, is at our hearts! A hundred times have we foretold the evils of which we are the victims—a hundred times have we imprecated the public vengeance on the hateful manœuvres of those men who convulse our country under the mask of humanity:—We have gained no redress! Oh may the dreadful catastrophe, of which we have sketched to you the picture, serve as a lesson for futurity, and preserve, from like calamities, those of our Fellow-Citizens to whose lot they have not yet fallen!

It is to your steadiness, in punishing the authors of our disasters and in checking their new efforts, that the Western and Southern Provinces have to look for their security.

As for the Northern Province its losses are irreparable. Immense capitals are sunk; the restoration of its industry requires such an advance of funds as the merchants and proprietors cannot wholly accomplish. We speak not to you of individuals, but you will examine, Sirs, what, on your part,
is

is required by the interest of the colony and that of the nation.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE, you have heard a recital of the greatest calamity that has visited the human race in the course of the eighteenth century.

You have heard the complaint of the first colony in the world, necessary to the existence of that nation whose concerns are placed in your hands. That Colony wishes to interest you only by its feelings and its sufferings !

It demands, from you, JUSTICE, SAFETY, SUCCOUR !

Signed, J. B. MILLET.
COUGNACQ MION.
SAINTE-JAMES.
CHENEAU DE LA MEGRIERE.
LA-GOURGUE.
LE BUCQUET.

REPLY of the PRESIDENT.

TO love our Country is a source of heart-felt satisfaction !
To serve it in time of distress is the first of civic virtues, and
is yours ! The calamities of the Colony are dreadful ! The
National Assembly views them with horror, with indigna-
tion, with grief ! You ask its JUSTICE ; that is due from it
to all the citizens of the Empire. Its PROTECTION ; that is
due to your courage, your patriotism, your misfortunes !
Its SUCCOUR ; that it is already occupied in providing. It
will give your Application its most serious attention, and in-
vites you to the honours of the Session.

REPLY

REPLY OF THE DEPUTIES OF ST. DOMINGO
TO THE CHARGES OF M. BRISSOT.

*Addressed, on the 5th of December, to the President of the
National Assembly.**

MR. PRESIDENT,

AT the bar of the National Assembly we have pointed out the Society of the *Amis des Noirs* as the Instigators of the Troubles in St. Domingo. No candid and well-informed man can doubt the fact. Yet M. *Brissot*, one of the members of that Society, which has been incessantly busied in the ruin of the Colonies, dares accuse us of having ourselves excited the Insurrection of our slaves that we might call in a foreign power to our aid and protection; and, as if the Treason existed and was proved, he two days ago moved, that the General Assembly of St. Domingo should be impeached before the Supreme National Court. Incumbered by the weight of those evils which he has brought upon his country, he seeks to direct the public attention from himself; he would interest the Representatives of the Nation in his personal defence; he hopes to mislead the justice of the National Assembly, that he may shelter himself from its decrees. *We challenge him, Mr. President, to exhibit his proofs. We intreat the National Assembly to require them. And, as for us, intrusted by a great Colony with the duty of prosecuting its vengeance, we will bring forward, upon the question, such an accumulation of*
evidence

* This Letter was, on the morning of the 5th of December, delivered by two of the Deputies to the President; the Secretary, who had his orders to lay it before the Assembly, thought proper to defer its reading to the next day.

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evidence as shall leave neither to the public opinion nor to the sentence of the law any room to hesitate in distinguishing the guilty.

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We are, respectfully,

Mr. PRESIDENT,

Your, &c.

Signed, J. B. MILLET.
COUGNACQ MION.
SAINTE-JAMES.
CHENAU DE LA MEGRIERE.
LA-GOURGUE.
LE BUCQUET.

THE END.

